

### Promoting the mental health of health professionals

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## INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Promovendo a saúde mental de profissionais da saúde

Promoting the mental health of health professionals

Promoción de la salud mental de los profesionales de la salud

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** identifying the requirements and the main measures adopted to promote the mental health of health workers. **Method:** an integrative review conducted in the period from the 1st to 25th August 2014, from the virtual health library in the databases LILACS, MEDLINE and SciELO. There were investigated articles from the last four years in Portuguese. Applying inclusion criteria, it came to a total of 07 articles. **Results:** the promotion of mental health at work becomes of paramount importance to achieve emotional balance of health professionals, as well as to understand the causes of eventual disruptions of this balance. **Conclusions:** it registers the need to put in practice actions that promote the mental health of these subjects. **Descriptors:** Health Promotion, Mental health, Health personnel.

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** identificar as demandas e principais medidas adotadas para a promoção da saúde mental de trabalhadores da saúde. **Método:** revisão integrativa realizada no período de 01 a 25 de Agosto de 2014, a partir da biblioteca virtual em saúde nas bases de dados LILACS, MEDLINE e SciELO. Foram investigados artigos dos últimos 4 anos em português. Aplicados os critérios de inclusão, chegou-se a um total de 07 artigos. **Resultados:** a promoção da saúde mental no trabalho torna-se de suma importância para se alcançar o equilíbrio emocional dos profissionais de saúde, bem como para se entender as causas de eventuais rompimentos deste equilíbrio. **Conclusão:** registra-se a necessidade de se colocar em prática ações que promovam a saúde mental destes sujeitos. **Descritores:** Promoção da saúde, Saúde mental, Pessoal de saúde.

### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** identificar las demandas y las principales medidas adoptadas para la promoción de la salud mental de los trabajadores de salud. **Método:** una revisión integradora llevada a cabo en el período comprendido entre 1 a 25 de agosto 2014, de la biblioteca virtual de salud en las bases de datos LILACS, MEDLINE y SciELO. Se investigaron los artículos de los últimos cuatro años en portugués. Criterios de inclusión aplicados llegaron a un total de 07 artículos. **Resultados:** la promoción de la salud mental en el trabajo se vuelve de vital importancia para lograr el equilibrio emocional de los profesionales de la salud, así como para comprender las causas de las perturbaciones de este equilibrio. **Conclusiones:** registrase a la necesidad de poner en marcha acciones con vistas a la promoción de la salud mental de estos sujetos. **Descriptor:** Promoción de la salud, Salud mental, El personal de salud.

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## INTRODUCTION

**W**ork has been diversifying over time. Concerning it, the workers' health was seen as a very important factor for most employers that depend on hand active and highly productive work for the development of designated activities. In addition, mental health worker has also received increasingly attention to the sciences that study this process, becoming a concern of researchers in the field, since most of the causes of illnesses of employees are caused by some factor base compromising mental health.

Currently, there is a concern about the mental health and well-being of workers in the health field. A growing permanent sick leave for mental illness; this situation is likely in the near future, to overcome the absences from cardiovascular and musculoskeletal diseases.<sup>1</sup>

The term "Occupational Health" can be defined as promoting and maintaining the highest level of physical well-being, mental and social workers in all occupations; the prevention among workers of occupational diseases caused by their working conditions; the protection of workers in their labors, the risks resulting from factors adverse to health; the placement and retention of workers in occupational environments adapted to their physiological and psychological aptitudes.<sup>2</sup>

Workers' health has as its scope the multidisciplinary approach and inter sectoral actions in view of all with views will overcome the understanding and watertight and fragmented interventions; allows the participation of workers, as subjects of their life and health, able to contribute their knowledge to advance the understanding of the impact of work on the health-disease process and to intervene politically and to promote workers' health.<sup>3</sup>

Inserted in the labor context, the healthcare professional often works in favor of optimizing the well-being of their clients and often neglects the care towards his own health.<sup>4</sup>

Disorders resulting from psychic workloads are expressed in the worker's body through the occurrence of diseases related to work. In professional healthcare, especially those who have direct relationship with patients, emotional distress as a result of tasks, is notorious, triggering emotional overload, such as feelings of anxiety, emotional stress, depressive syndromes, among other ailments, often associated with physical disorders.<sup>5</sup>

Satisfied workers tend to carry out their activities more closely, welcome and warmth, which contributes to the humanization in relationships. One cannot overlook the quality of work to thus provide more safety to the user.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the identification of situations of suffering can come to initiate the emergence of solutions and strategies to change this reality, making the satisfactory for every day the professionals.<sup>7</sup>

In this sense, the need to plan and carry out interventions aimed at the prevention of accidents or illnesses or promotion of health workers in the health sector must be emphasized, as well as being recommended to observe if there is participation of workers and unions in the formation of a theoretical model valid to guide the actions, appropriate methods and instruments to measure the intervention of integrating results with the context of organizational development.<sup>8</sup>

In this context, the present study seeks to expand existing knowledge about the theme, in order to identify the demands of psycho-emotional nature of health workers, and the measures adopted to promote the mental health of the public.

## METHOD

This is an integrative review.<sup>9</sup> Data collection occurred during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014, the portal of the Virtual Health Library (BVS) from the databases LILACS, MEDLINE and SciELO, in order to respond to the question: What are the main psycho-emotional demands of workers, and the measures adopted to promote their mental health?

The inclusion criteria adopted to select the articles were published in the last four years; in Portuguese; are available in full and that addressed the mental health of workers and measures to promote health. Exclusion criteria were repeated, editorial articles, reflective articles, articles that did not respond to the issue of research, as well as theses and dissertations.

There were used the following descriptors: Health Promotion, Mental Health, and Health Staff. In the first search descriptor applying the Promotion of Health were obtained by adding the databases, 62372 articles. Using the Mental Health descriptor found in the databases used 502123 articles. Now the Health Personnel descriptor, found 420416 articles. The sums of all found items there were obtained a total of 984.911 articles.

Research table of descriptors in the sources



DESCRIPTORS / SOURCES	LILACS	MEDLINE	SciELO	Total
Health promotion	8.042	52587	1.743	62372
Mental Health	350.972	149020	2.131	502123
Health staff	220.686	198893	837	420416
Total	579700	400500	4711	984911

In order to proceed with a refinement of the research there was performed pairing the descriptors, which are associated as follows and with the numbering of articles found: Promotion of Health AND Mental Health with 4715 articles, Health Promotion AND Personal Health with 17114 articles and Mental Health AND Health Staff with 95992 articles. Making the sum of the studies found after pairing was reached the number of 117821 articles.

Pairing table of descriptors				
DESCRIPTORS / SOURCES	LILACS	MEDLINE	SciELO	Total
Health and Mental Health Promotion	774	3824	117	4715
Health promotion and Health Staff	13.311	3732	71	17114
Mental Health and Health Staff	73.843	22066	83	95992
Total	87928	29622	271	117821

After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria there were selected 05 articles, which were part of this integrative review. However, a reassessment of the selection process was conducted, and then selected 07 articles.

Flowchart I. “Road Traveled”

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The period of publication of the texts was January 2009 to August 2014.

In the found items, social relations at work is like a central dimension for most surveyed.

About the content of the articles there were identified, for ICU staff of a public hospital Santa Catarina and in Rio a private, that the meanings of work are linked to social contribution and responsibility and/or exchange. Most of these professionals understand the work as one of the most important items of their lives, surpassing even the idea of pay. The care of patients who truly need assistance is something seen positively. So health care to show how aid factor to maintaining mental health. Therefore, one cannot ignore this information when it comes to mental health and quality of life of hospitals workers and can then be understood as a factor that can promote the mental health of these professionals.<sup>10</sup>

For nursing professionals from the intensive care unit of a university hospital, located in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, their involvement in work is important for their lives, but because of the difficulty of some professionals in dealing with the drawbacks of the profession, occurs in their daily lives an elevation of stress and occupational burden, charges and dissatisfaction in the workplace or family. One must then observe the recommendation that hospitals take into account the social context in which the professional lives and how his mental health can be affected by biopsychosocial risk of such a routine. Thus, health care is shown again as mental health promotion factor. However, it is necessary emphasizing that the care of the mental health of the health worker, which is connected directly to the assistance to the other, should provide promoting factors of physical and mental well-being to prevent errors and promote quality of care.<sup>11</sup>

Already in self-reported workers of the municipal health system of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais/Brazil, there was prevalence of pain in the upper limbs, lower limbs and back. The prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders was 49,9%; and remained positively associated with female gender, living with a partner, to practice physical activity less than twice a week, and reports consistent with common mental disorder. In this sense, it is observed higher prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders in health workers reporting poor environmental conditions. When compared to the prevalence of workers assess as great environmental working conditions, it was found positive gradient, 33%, 55% and 57% higher in the group that reported satisfactory, reasonable and precarious conditions, respectively. Such factors can affect the safety and physical health of workers as well as their mental health and well-being. Then being necessary environments that are free from: nuisance and annoying noise, climate discomfort, adoption of inadequate and/or prolonged postures due to the characteristics of equipment, materials and furniture.<sup>12</sup>

By analyzing the articles produced with the theme quality of life at work, it becomes possible to make the indication of three matrices on the theme: Humanist Sociotechnical Matrix, Matrix and Matrix of Total Quality. Authors indicate that should be adopted by health facilities, policies that are aimed at improving the quality of life and physical and mental health of workers and seeking to adapt the worker to the efforts at work. To improve this situation, the way forward needs in order to prioritize reading the context in which people work, guiding these individuals for their change.<sup>13</sup>

Another study of municipal employees of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais/Brazil, the Poisson regression was used to determine factors associated with absenteeism. Absenteeism and illness was associated with activities related to watchdog groups and vigilance, culture and health. The comorbidities were more LER/DORT, back pain, depression/anxiety and perception of mental fatigue. The medication report for depression/anxiety proved to be a protective factor. More likely to mental disorder, dissatisfaction with the ability to work, reasonable and poor working conditions were associated with the outcome. It is known that the duration of sick leave to return to work is directly related to the time required for recovery. However, it is also true that this is a dynamic process that involves not only the restoration of physical and mental health but also includes adaptation to work and responsiveness to performance demands. Therefore, strategies should be established to combat dissatisfaction with work capacity and inadequate working conditions as well, as these were significantly associated with absenteeism in work sectors.<sup>14</sup>

In another study we investigate the care production strategies in mental health professionals from a Community Center, where the prospects that this approach brings to the workers in this sector are very favorable to the better development of their work activities in the service daily promoting better recognition of the plurality of the determinants of mental health-disease process. The design of health workers, linked to social determination of the health-disease, how they face their problems in daily work are the result of the ways is embedded in social reproduction and thus the psychological distress is understood as a social production multiple and complex determination.<sup>15</sup>

In order to understand how nurses of the Family Health Strategy experience the overlapping of duties a qualitative research was conducted with nurses in Recife, PE. The

main themes in the script referred to reports of stress, dissatisfaction, physical and mental illness, recognition of work relevance and importance of their own performance, and low work involvement. Due to the consequences of chronic stress on the health and quality of health professionals work, becomes increasingly common the search for personal solutions for tensions caused by work and the occupational strain with palliative (religious activities, self-massage, yoga, floral, Reiki, medications). Individual aspects cannot be discarded, but it should be emphasized that the promotion of mental health of health professionals requires space for ongoing dialogue between planning, implementation, management and evaluation.<sup>16</sup>

Professionals working in health facilities experience complex situations, where there is suffering due to the suffering of others, and other factors.

This concept of suffering (including "feeling of displeasure and tension") demand defense strategies, defined as workers' reactions to coping, protection (and adaptation), the situations presented to them as "risks" (and suffering) in their work; comprising the context of relations - hierarchical, command structures, quality of interaction with supervisors and peers themselves, and aspects of the daily work management - pace, conferences, etc.<sup>17</sup>

It was observed the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders in health care workers which could also be associated, among other reasons, the report compatible with common mental disorder; high physical demand and inadequate working conditions. In this sense, the personal involvement with psychotropic substances must be fought with the implementation of internal policies to promote the mental health of workers.<sup>11</sup>

It should provide healthcare professionals in their workplaces, environments that can give them the opportunity to exercise their daily practice, being without: troublesome and annoying noises, climate discomfort, and adoption of inadequate and/or prolonged postures due to the characteristics of equipment, materials and furniture.

Thus, it is worth noting the concepts with which the Occupational Health operates in that stand out: the notion of wear and workloads, marking the interactive perspective between man and the different elements present in the processes/working environments leading to specific modes of reaction, adaptations, wear, extending the idea of risk and disease.<sup>18</sup>

Factors associated with absenteeism require significant amount of attention, mainly due to cost and service accumulation it causes, are also inserted in this context of physical and mental health issues.

It is then necessary to develop different care production strategies on mental health of health workers from the perspective of their alignment to the mental health policies and health promotion in the daily life of health practices. These strategies manifest themselves through their own behavior of each individual, because each one reacts in a particular way to each situation depending on its personality.<sup>17</sup>

By understanding how health professionals experience the overlapping of duties and building of technical autonomy it is possible to identify the little expectation, professional fulfillment and exhaustion cause suffering it causes negative attitudes, indicating the importance of promoting mental health of these individuals.



With this, the individual properties should be encouraged, noting that the promotion of mental health; health professionals also presupposes the creation of favorable spaces to permanent dialogue among all stakeholders.

In this context, suffering is not only a last result of the relationship with reality; it is both subjectivity of protection with regard to the world, seeking ways to act on the world, aiming to transform this suffering and find the path that overcomes the real resistance. Thus, the pain is at the same time, the world's subjective impression and origin of achieving movement thereof.<sup>19,20</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, the results of the research contributed to the understanding about the main measures adopted to promote the mental health of health workers, which is extremely important in developing prevention strategies and promoting the mental health of these professionals, as well as subsidies for reaching improvements in working conditions.

The understanding of the issues assigned to the promotion of mental health at work may be highly relevant to achieving emotional balance of health workers as well as to understand the cause of any disruptions of this balance, which is of great prominence to the promotion of mental health and quality of life at work.

Join the need to perform further studies that address this issue.

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